

**DRAFT
MASTER
PLAN**
& ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT

MARCH 2005



NORTHERN HIGHLAND AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST



NORTHERN HIGHLAND-AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST

DRAFT MASTER PLAN AND ENVIRON- MENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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This plan has been developed through a team effort by many individuals from the Department of Natural Resources. Through their hard work and expertise, these people have developed a plan that will guide the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest into the future.

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LETTER FROM PROPERTY SUPERINTENDENT

Wisconsinites care deeply about the current and future use of public forests in Wisconsin. The Northern Highland-American Legion (NH-AL) State Forest is no exception. As the largest state-owned property, the NH-AL is a vast and cherished part of Wisconsin's ecological, economic and social past, present and future. The NH-AL State Forest covers 225,000 acres located in northern Wisconsin in Vilas, Oneida and Iron counties.

This draft NH-AL master plan is designed to inform both general and technical readers about the future use and management of the forest. The department is committed to working with citizens and businesses alike to manage Wisconsin's state forests in a sustainable manner for current and future generations—an approach that incorporates ecological, economic and social values. I hope the information and vision in this plan will encourage enthusiasm and constructive discussion.

The NH-AL state forest is important to many people because it has the unique ability to meet many different needs. The forest generates employment and supports the economic well being of rural and urban communities alike, through the production of forest products we use daily and the recreation and tourism generated by the fantastic forest and lakes setting within the forest. The forest provides opportunities for a diverse array of recreation such as hiking, snowmobiling, biking and hunting, as well as the opportunity to simply sit quietly and enjoy its natural beauty. In addition, the forest cleans our air and water, provides habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species, and helps us sustain our quality of life.

Virtually all elements of the forest have seen increasing demands in the last decade—demands for ecological protection, forest production, and recreation activity. These demands have potential positive impacts—if development and use is properly planned and managed. Unplanned use and management could, however, overwhelm the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest's unique ability to provide the ecological, economic, and social benefits that are so highly valued by current residents, visitors, and businesses.

How is it possible to understand all of the various dimensions of the NH-AL and meet the increasing demands? What is the future of the forest and what policies will ensure its long-term sustainability?

The Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with Wisconsin citizens, businesses and visitors, provides this plan as the basis for that discussion and the future use and management of the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest.

Your feedback on the plan is welcomed and encouraged. With over 225,000 acres of land in the heart of the "Northwoods", Wisconsinites have a real opportunity to contribute to sustainable forestry. Together we can ensure that the NH-AL State Forest continues to provide ecological, economic and social benefits to future generations.



Dennis Leith
State Forest Superintendent

NORTHERN HIGHLAND-AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST: MASTER PLAN

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